

ANNOUNCEMENT OF FEDERAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Federal Agency Name(s): National Ocean Service (NOS), National Oceanic And Atmospheric Administration, Department of Commerce

Funding Opportunity Title: Ecological Forecasting (ECOFOR)FY06

Announcement Type: Initial

Funding Opportunity Number: NOS-NCCOS-2006-2000325

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 11.400, Geodetic Surveys and Services (Applications of the National Geodetic Ref System)

Dates: The deadline for receipt of proposals at the CSCOR office is 3 p.m., EST, October 25, 2005

Funding Opportunity Description: The purpose of this document is to advise the public that NOAA/NOS/NCCOS/CSCOR is soliciting proposals for projects of 2 to 5 years in duration for the development of new ecological forecasting capabilities and the transition of existing ecological forecasts to operational status. These ecological forecasts are to support critical management decisions for the management of the Nation's Great Lake, estuarine, coastal and ocean ecosystems. Funding is contingent upon the availability of Fiscal Year 2006 Federal appropriations. It is anticipated that final recommendations for funding under this announcement will be made by March 2006, and that projects funded under this announcement will have a May 1, 2006, start date.

Electronic Access: Background information about Ecological Forecasting is available in a publication by the Committee on Environment and Natural Resources, Subcommittee on Ecological Systems at <http://www.nbio.gov/about/pubs/efbrochure/>. A NOAA perspective on Ecological Forecasting is available at <http://www.nccos.noaa.gov/documents/ecoforecasting.pdf> Examples of projects funded under earlier Ecofore announcements are available at <http://www.cop.noaa.gov/ecoforecasting/welcome.html>. Proposals should be submitted through Grants.gov, <http://www.grants.gov>

FULL ANNOUNCEMENT TEXT

I. Funding Opportunity Description

A. Program Objective

The Center for Sponsored Coastal Ocean Research (CSCOR) and its Coastal Ocean Program (COP) has a long history of providing decision makers within and outside of NOAA with high-quality scientific information and predictive tools in formats appropriate to promoting near-term improvements in coastal ecosystem management. The need for multidisciplinary coastal ecosystem studies to improve our understanding of the physical, biological, and chemical processes in these complex systems has only grown in recent years as management of coastal regions moves toward greater consideration of ecosystem principles, including connections with terrestrial and atmospheric systems. CSCOR and COP have been committed to producing data and information products such as technical reports, peer-reviewed publications, databases, and numerical and conceptual models so that they will be accessible to users of this information. However, the delivery of comprehensive information products and technologies to the appropriate management community for application to specific coastal management issues remains a challenge; the EcoFore program, in part, is meant to address this challenge.

As our understanding of ecosystems and their interactions has matured, we are moving rapidly toward a capability to quantify the outcomes of anthropogenic and natural forcing variables. This capability can provide coastal managers with a synthesis of state-of-the-art science in a form that they can utilize to make proactive management decisions in an ecosystem context. The mathematical and conceptual models that underlie these ecological forecasting capabilities can also provide a framework for improved communication between scientists and managers and identification of science priorities for the future. Ecological forecasting is a key activity in NOAA/NOS that integrates many coastal management issues (<http://www.nos.noaa.gov/topics/coasts/ecoforecasting/welcome.html>). NOS has responded to national task force recommendations (<http://www.nbii.gov/about/pubs/efbrochure/index.html>), and input from the science community (e.g., Science, Vol 293, 27 Jul 2001, pp 657-660) by making the development of ecological forecasting capabilities a priority. The report of the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy (http://www.oceancommission.gov/documents/full_color_rpt/welcome.html) highlights the importance of ecosystem-based management, and its reliance on the development of predictive capabilities for ocean ecosystems. Several surveys and workshops with coastal managers point to the need for ecological models able to make predictions that will inform ecosystem-based management, for examples, see <http://www.nccos.noaa.gov/documents/nutrientpollution.pdf>;

<http://www.csc.noaa.gov/survey/02survey.pdf>;
<http://www.csc.noaa.gov/survey/99survey.pdf>
<http://www.csc.noaa.gov/survey/1996/>;

<http://www.coastalstates.org/pages/sp.html#1>;

<http://www.csc.noaa.gov/mpa/mpana?sum.pdf>).

Ecological Forecasting, especially in coastal areas, is a priority for other Federal agencies as well. The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) has a program signed to extend NASA-sponsored satellite observations and predictions from Earth science models to decision support tools to serve applications of national priority (<http://science.hq.nasa.gov/earth-sun/applications/>). Goals for the NASA Ecological Forecasting and Coastal Management applications programs are available through links at <http://aiwg.gsfc.nasa.gov/dss.html>. The program also has a solicitation for coastal ecological forecasting projects (<http://nspires.nasaprs.com> ? Reference ROSES-2005, NNH05ZDA001N, Appendix A.24). The NASA solicitation differs from this NOAA solicitation in that it seeks to extend NASA research results to existing decision support systems, whereas this solicitation allows for new forecasting capabilities to be developed.

Depending upon the maturity of the ecological forecasting capability, approaches may fall within or span the following two categories:

(1) Development of Forecasting Capability: utilize latest research findings, existing data sets, selective acquisition of additional data, and previous model frameworks to develop new models that can simulate complex ecosystem functions and anthropogenic stresses to project ecological outcomes from alternative scenarios and facilitate evaluation of management plans; this development of capabilities may include or link to analyses of human social and economic dimensions.

(2) Transition/Operationalization of Forecasts: assess and improve existing ecological models including forecast accuracy, precision, and sensitivity; define an acceptable level of accuracy for proposed forecasts; enhance risk assessment tools for management scenarios; develop testing and comparison metrics for forecasts; and develop methods to share, visualize, and communicate forecasts and uncertainty to user groups. Proposals in this category must make a compelling case that this forecasting capability will be used to make management decisions. Forecasts in this category may include both short-term, recurring forecasts (e.g. harmful algal bloom forecast produced twice-weekly) and longer-term more complex ecosystem forecasts that may, for example, produce a suite of outcomes for proactive decision making only once every few years (e.g. projection of hypoxia and living resource impacts for a range of nutrient loading scenarios).

B. Program Priorities

The numbering of priorities is not intended to indicate preference of one priority over another.

Program Priority: Priority Description

Ecological forecasting must include an understanding of the natural system in conjunction with societal and economic influences on it. To make effective ecological forecasts, it is necessary to understand coastal ecosystem structure, functioning, and responses to stress. For the purposes of this announcement, we intend to focus on five key categories of coastal ecosystem stress: 1) climate change, 2) extreme natural events, 3) pollution, 4) invasive species, and 5) land and resource use, with the recognition that several of these categories may be interactive with each other. Specific topics appropriate to address within the 5-stressor categories could include but are not limited to:

- Climate change/sea level rise and ecological effects on ecosystems, species interactions, organism distributions, and potential human health impacts;
- Forecasting impacts of anthropogenic and/or natural stressors on coastal systems, fisheries, and economies and how these impacts can be prevented or minimized;
- Linked ecological and economic predictions of coastal ecosystems and their responses to human alterations and coastal demographic trends;
- Interactions of watershed loading, coastal circulation, and ecosystem dynamics to predict habitat change and its effect on ecosystem function and water quality within and/or adjacent to the target ecosystem;
- Modeling and forecasting utilizing data from observation systems which results in useful management products not provided by the observations alone;
- Ecosystem susceptibility/resilience to perturbations or species invasions and the potential spread of introduced species and associated ecosystem impacts.

Regions or ecosystems of study can include the coastal ocean of the U.S., the U.S. Great Lakes, estuaries, and coral reefs. Studies which can provide

forecasts focused on or applicable to the management of NOAA protected resources and areas such as marine protected areas or estuarine research reserves are encouraged.

Proposals should include justification for the ecosystem chosen, in terms of importance, economic value, and/or ecological significance. Proposals should provide detailed descriptions of the predictive/forecasting capability to be developed, management issue(s) to be addressed, the target audience or users of developed forecasts, and how forecasts will be provided to users. Explicit identification of the end user group(s) is required and should include evidence of linkages between the scientific questions and management needs, in the form of participation of co-investigators from both scientific and management entities. All proposed forecasts must have a clear application to one or more coastal resource management issues, and be tractable within the time and budget proposed.

C. Program Authority

16 U.S.C. 1456c

II. Award Information

A. Funding Availability

Funding is contingent upon availability of Federal appropriations. NOAA is committed to continual improvement of the grants process and accelerating the award of financial assistance to qualified recipients in accordance with the recommendations of the Program Review Team (Information available at www.noaa.gov). In order to fulfill these responsibilities, this solicitation announces that award amounts to be determined by the proposals and available funds typically not to exceed \$500,000 per project per year with project durations from 2 - 5 years. It is anticipated that 3 to 6 total projects will be funded. Support in out years after FY 2006 is contingent upon the availability of funds.

Applicants are hereby given notice that funds have not yet been appropriated for this program. In no event will NOAA or the Department of Commerce be responsible for proposal preparation costs if this program fails to receive funding or is cancelled because of other agency priorities. There is no guarantee that sufficient funds will be available to make awards for all qualified projects. Publication of this notice does not oblige NOAA to award any specific project or to obligate any available funds. If one incurs any costs prior to receiving an award agreement signed by an authorized NOAA official, one would do so solely at one's own risk of these costs not being included under the award.

Publication of this notice does not obligate any agency to any specific award or to obligate any part of the entire amount of funds available. Recipients and subrecipients are subject to all Federal laws and agency policies, regulations and procedures applicable to Federal financial assistance awards.

B. Project/Award Period

Full proposals may cover a project/award period of up to 5 years, but shorter-term project proposals will also be welcomed. Multi-year awards may be funded incrementally on an annual basis, but, once awarded, those awards will not compete for funding in subsequent years. Each award shall require a project description that can be easily divided into annual increments of meaningful work representing solid accomplishments (if prospective funding is not made available, or is discontinued).

The following is a description of multi-year awards for those applicants subsequently recommended for award. Multi-year awards are awards which have an award/project period of more than 12 months of activity. Multi-year awards are partially funded when the awards are approved, and are subsequently funded in increments. One of the purposes of multi-year awards is to reduce the administrative burden on both the applicant and the operating unit. For example, with proper planning, one application can suffice for the entire multi-year award period. Funding for each year's activity is contingent upon the availability of funds from Congress, satisfactory performance, and is at the sole discretion of the agency. Multi-year funding is appropriate for projects to be funded for 2 to 5 years. Once approved, full applications are not required for the continuations into the out years.

C. Type of Funding Instrument

Funding instruments available are project grants and cooperative agreements.

(1) Research Project Grants: A research project grant is one in which substantial programmatic involvement by NOAA is not anticipated by the recipient during the project period. Applicants for grants must demonstrate an ability to conduct the proposed research with minimal assistance, other than financial support, from NOAA.

(2) Cooperative Agreements: A cooperative agreement implies that NOAA will assist recipients in conducting the proposed research. The application should be presented in a manner that demonstrates the applicant's ability to address the research problem in a collaborative manner with NOAA. A cooperative agreement is appropriate when substantial

NOAA involvement is anticipated. This means that the recipient can expect substantial agency collaboration, participation, or intervention in project performance. Substantial involvement exists when: responsibility for the management, control, direction, or performance of the project is shared by the assisting agency and the recipient; or the assisting agency has the right to intervene (including interruption or modification) in the conduct or performance of project activities.

(3) Determination of which instrument to use: Applicants must specify the type of award for which they are applying, either a grant or a cooperative agreement. The funding agency will review the applications in accordance with the evaluation criteria. Before issuing awards, NOAA will determine whether a grant or cooperative agreement is the appropriate instrument based upon the need for substantial NOAA involvement in the project.

(4) In an effort to maximize the use of limited resources, applications from non-Federal, non-NOAA Federal and NOAA Federal applicants will be competed against each other. Research proposals selected for funding from non-Federal researchers will be funded through a project grant or cooperative agreement.

Research proposals selected for funding from non-NOAA Federal applicants will be funded through an interagency transfer, provided legal authority exists for the Federal applicant to receive funds from another agency. PLEASE NOTE: Before non-NOAA Federal applicants may be funded, they must demonstrate that they have legal authority to receive funds from another Federal agency in excess of their appropriation. Because this announcement is not proposing to procure goods or services from the applicants, the Economy Act (31 U.S.C. section 1535) is not an appropriate basis. Support may be solely through NCCOS/CSCOR/COP or partnered with other Federal offices and agencies.

III. Eligibility Information

A. Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants are institutions of higher education, other non-profits, state, local, Indian Tribal Governments, and Federal agencies that possess the statutory authority to receive financial assistance.

NCCOS/CSCOR will not fund any Federal FTE salaries, but will fund travel, equipment, supplies, and contractual personnel costs associated with the proposed work. Furthermore, no expenses of any kind will be provided for NOS researchers.

(1) Researchers must be employees of an eligible institution listed above; and proposals must be submitted through that institution. Non-Federal researchers should comply with their institutional requirements for proposal submission.

(2) Non-NOAA Federal applicants will be required to submit certifications or documentation showing that they have specific legal authority to receive funds from the Department of Commerce (DOC) for this research.

(3) NCCOS/CSCOR will accept proposals that include foreign researchers as collaborators with a researcher, who has met the above stated eligibility requirements; and who also is an employee of an eligible institution listed above.

(4) Non-Federal researchers affiliated with NOAA-University Joint Institutes should comply with joint institutional requirements; they will be funded through grants either to their institutions or to joint institutes.

B. Cost Sharing or Matching Requirement

Competition: Ecological Forecasting (ECOFORE)FY06

There is no cost sharing requirement for this competition.

C. Other Criteria that Affect Eligibility

Each proposal must also include the ten elements listed under Proposal Submission/Required Elements, (a)-(j) or it will be returned to sender without further consideration.

IV. Application and Submission Information

A. Address to Request Application Package

To apply for this NOAA federal funding opportunity, please go to www.grants.gov, and use the following funding opportunity # NOS-NCCOS-2006-2000325

www.noaa.gov

Applications submitted in response to this announcement are strongly encouraged to be submitted through the Grants.gov Web site. The full funding announcement for this program is available via the Grants.gov Web site: <http://www.grants.gov> These announcements will also be available at the NOAA Web site <http://www.ofa.noaa.gov/%7Eamd/SOLINDEX.HTML> or by contacting the program official identified below. After October 1, 2004, you will be able to access, download and submit

electronic grant applications for NOAA Programs in this announcement at <http://www.grants.gov>. The closing dates will be the same as for the paper submissions noted in this announcement. NOAA strongly recommends that you do not wait until the application deadline date to begin the application process through Grants.gov.

Getting started with Grants.gov is easy! Go to <http://www.Grants.gov>. There are two key features on the site: Find Grant Opportunities and Apply for Grants. Everything else on the site is designed to support these two features and your use of them. While you can begin searching for grant opportunities for which you would like to apply immediately, it is recommended that you complete the remaining Get Started steps sooner rather than later, so that when you find an opportunity for which you would like to apply, you are ready to go.

Get Started Step 1B Find Grant Opportunity for which you would like to apply. Start your search for Federal government-wide grant opportunities and register to receive automatic e-mail notifications of new grant opportunities or any modifications to grant opportunities as they are posted to the site by clicking the Find Grant Opportunities tab at the top of the page.

Get Started Step 2B Register with Central Contractor Registry (CCR). Your organization will also need to be registered with Central Contractor Registry. You can register with them online. This will take about 30 minutes. You should receive your CCR registration within 3 business days. Important: You must have a DUNS number from Dun & Bradstreet before you register with CCR. Many organizations already have a DUNS number. To determine if your organization already has a DUNS number or to obtain a DUNS number, contact Dun & Bradstreet at 1- 866-705-5711. This will take about 10 minutes and is free of charge. Be sure to complete the Marketing Partner ID (MPIN) and Electronic Business Primary Point of Contact fields during the CCR registration process. These are mandatory fields that are required when submitting grant applications through Grants.gov.

Get Started Step 3B Register with the Credential Provided. You must register with a Credential Provider to receive a username and password. This will be required to securely submit your grant application.

Get Started Step 4B Register with Grants.gov. The final step in the Get Started process is to register with Grants.gov. This will be required to submit grant applications on behalf of your organization. After you have completed the registration process, you will receive e-mail notification confirming that you are able to submit applications through Grants.gov.

Get Started Step 5B Log onto Grants.gov. After you have registered with Grants.gov, you can log on to Grants.gov to verify if you have registered successfully, to check

application status, and to update information in your applicant profile, such as your name, telephone number, e-mail address, and title. In the future, you will have the ability to determine if you are authorized to submit applications through Grants.gov on behalf of your organization.

Hard copies of proposals will also be accepted and require an original proposal and 2 proposal copies (single-sided) at time of submission. This includes color or high-resolution graphics as part of the proposal. For color graphics, submit either color originals or color copies.

Facsimile transmissions and electronic mail submission of full proposals will not be accepted. Submit the hard copy original and 2 copies of your proposal to Attn. EcoFore 06, Center for Sponsored Coastal Ocean Research/Coastal Ocean Program (N/SCI2), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, 1305 East-West Highway, SSMC4, 8th Floor Station 8243, Silver Spring, MD 20910.

B. Content and Form of Application

Applications submitted in response to this announcement are strongly encouraged to be submitted through the Grants.gov web site. Electronic Access for the full funding announcement for this program is available via the Grants.gov web site: www.grants.gov. These announcements will also be available at the NOAA web site <http://www.ofa.noaa.gov/%7Eamd/SOLINDEX.HTML> or by contacting the program official identified below.

If you are unable to access this information, you may call NCCOS/CSCOR/COP at 301-713-3338 to leave a mailing request.

This document requests full proposals only. The provisions for proposal preparation provided here are mandatory. Proposals received after the published deadline (refer to DATES) or proposals that deviate from the prescribed format will be returned to the sender without further consideration. Information regarding this announcement, additional background information are available on the NCCOS/CSCOR/COP home page.

1. Proposals

As previously stated, applications should be submitted through www.Grants.gov unless an applicant does not have internet access. In that case, hard copy proposals will be accepted (refer to IV.)

2. Required Elements

For clarity in the submission of proposals, the following Definitions are provided for recipient use: Funding and/or Budget Period - The period of time when Federal funding is available for obligation by the recipient. The funding period must always be specified in multi-year awards, using fixed year funds. This term may also be used to mean "budget period". A budget period is typically 12 months. Award and/or Project Period - The period established in the award document during which Federal sponsorship begins and ends. The term "award period" is also referred to as project period in 15 CFR 14.2(cc).

Each proposal must include the following ten elements or it will be returned to sender without further consideration:

(a) Standard Form 424. At time of proposal submission, all applicants anticipating direct funding shall submit the Standard Form, SF-424, "Application for Federal Assistance," to indicate the total amount of funding proposed for the whole project period. This form is to be the cover page for the original proposal and all requested copies. Multi-institutional proposals must include signed SF-424 forms from all institutions requesting funding.

(b) Summary title page. The Summary title page identifies the project's title, starting with the acronym: Ecofore 06, a short title (less than 50 characters), and the PI's name and affiliation, complete address, phone, FAX and E-mail information. The requested budget for each fiscal year should be included on the Summary title page. Multi-institution proposals must also identify the lead investigator for each institution and the requested funding for each fiscal year for each institution on the title page, but no signatures are required on the title page from the additional institutions. Lead investigator and separate budget information is not requested on the title page for institutions that are proposed to receive funds through a subcontract to the lead institution; however, the COP Summary Proposal Budget Form and

accompanying budget justification must be submitted for each subcontractor. For further details on budget information, please see Section (g) Budget of this Part.

(c) One-page abstract/project summary. A project summary (abstract) is to be submitted at time of application, shall include an introduction of the problem, rationale, scientific objectives and/or hypotheses to be tested, and a brief summary of work to be completed.

The summary should appear on a separate page, headed with the proposal title, institution(s), investigator(s), total proposed cost, and budget period. It should be written in the third person. The summary is used to help compare proposals quickly and allows the respondents to summarize these key points in their own words.

(d) Project description. The description of the proposed project must be complete and divided into annual increments of work that include: identification of the problem, scientific objectives, proposed methodology, relevance to the Ecofore program goals, and its scientific priorities. The project description (including relevant results from prior support) should not exceed 20 pages in 12-point, easily legible font. Page limits are inclusive of figures, other visual materials, and letters of endorsement, but are exclusive of references, a milestone chart, and letters of collaboration from unfunded collaborators. This section should clearly identify project management with a description of the functions of each PI within a team. It should provide a full scientific justification for the research, rather than simply reiterating justifications presented in this document. It should also include:

(i) The objective for the period of proposed work and its expected significance;

(ii) The relation to the present state of knowledge in the field and relation to previous work and work in progress by the proposing principal investigator(s);

(iii) A discussion of how the proposed project lends value to the program goals;

(iv) Potential coordination with other investigators.

(e) References cited. Reference information is required. Each reference must include the names of all authors in the same sequence they appear in the publications, the article title, volume number, page numbers, and year of publications. While there is no established page limitation, this section should include bibliographic citations only and should not be used to provide parenthetical information outside of the 20-page proposal descriptions.

(f) Milestone chart. Provide time lines of major tasks covering the duration of the proposed project.

(g) Standard Form 424A. At time of proposal submission, all applicants are required to submit a SF424A Budget Form for each fiscal year increment. Multi-institution proposals must include a SF424A for each institution, and multi-investigator proposals using a lead investigator with a contractor/subgrantee approach must submit a SF424A for each contractor/subgrantee.

Each contractor or subgrantee should be listed as a separate item. Describe products/services to be obtained and indicate the applicability or necessity of each to the project. Provide separate budgets for each subgrantee or contractor regardless of the dollar value and indicate the basis for the cost estimates. List all subgrantee or contractor costs under line item 6.f. contractual on the SF424A.

All applications must include a budget narrative and a justification to support all proposed budget categories. Any ship time needs must be clearly identified in the proposed budget. The proposer is responsible for requesting ship time through appropriate channels and for meeting all requirements to ensure the availability of requested ship time. Copies of relevant ship time request forms should be included with the proposal.

(h) Biographical sketch. All principal and co-investigators must provide summaries of up to 2 pages that include the following:

(i) A listing of professional and academic credentials and mailing address;

(ii) A list of up to five publications most closely related to the proposed project and five other significant publications. Additional lists of publications, lectures, and the rest should not be included;

(iii) A list of all persons (including their organizational affiliation) in alphabetical order, with whom the investigator has collaborated on a project or publication within the last 48 months, including collaborators on the proposal and persons listed in the publications. If no collaborators exist, this should be so indicated;

(iv) A list of persons (including their organizational affiliation) with whom the individual has had an association like thesis advisor or postdoctoral scholar sponsor;

(v) A list of the names and institutions of the individual's own graduate and postgraduate advisors. The material presented in (c, d, and e) is used to assist in identifying potential conflicts or bias in the selection of reviewers.

(i) Current and pending support. Describe all current and pending federal financial/funding support for all principal and co-investigators, including subsequent funding in the case of continuing grants. The capability of the investigator and collaborators to

complete the proposed work in light of present commitments to other projects. Therefore, please discuss the percentage of time investigators and collaborators have devoted to other Federal or non-Federal projects, as compared to the time that will be devoted to the project solicited under this notice.

(j) Proposal format and assembly. Proposals submitted via Grants.gov APPLY should follow the format guidelines below:

Attachments must be submitted in Adobe Acrobat PDF format to maintain format integrity. Please submit the required documents as described below. The following documents appear under Required Elements within each FFO. Submit in the order requested and File Name shown below.

A. Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424)

1. Complete the form. Only one SF-424 is accepted within grants.gov

2. In the case of multiple institutions requesting direct funding. Attach the additional SF-424 in ?Other attachments?

see ?K. Other Attachments Form? below

3. Label the file name as ?SF424/Institution name.?

B. Summary Title Page

1. This an attachment. Label file name as ?Summary Title Page.?

see ?K. Other Attachments Form? below

C. One-page abstract/project summary

1. This an attachment. Label file name as ?Abstract.?

see ?K. Other Attachments Form? below.

D. Project Description

1. This an attachment. Label file name as ?Project Description.?

see ?K. Other Attachments Form? below.

E. References Cited

1. This an attachment. Label file name as ?References.?

see ?K. Other Attachments Form? below.

F. Milestone Chart

1. This an attachment. Label file name as ?Milestone Chart.?

see ?K. Other Attachments Form? below.

G. SF-424A - Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs

1. Complete the form. Only one 424A is accepted within grants.gov.

2. If additional pages are needed,

see ?K. Other Attachments Form? below

3. Label the additional 424As by form ?424A/institution name.?

H. Budget Justification/Narrative

1. This an attachment. Label file name as ?Budget Justification.?

see ?K? Other Attachments Form? below.

2. Label the additional budget justifications as ?Budget justification/institution name.?

3. Include ship time (if applicable) in the justification.

I. Biographical Sketch

1. This an attachment. Label file name as ?Bio Sketch/PI name.?

see ?K?. Other Attachments Form? below.

J. Current and Pending Support

1. This an attachment. Label file name as ?Current/pending support.?

see ?K?. Other Attachments Form? below.

K. Other Attachments Form

1. When submitting letters of support that are not included in the stated page limit of the project narrative, prepare one document containing those letters. Label file name as Letters of Support.

2. Other appropriate documents may also be submitted here, e.g. ?Data Management Plan.?

Save your completed application package with two different names before submission to avoid having to re-create the package should you experience submission problems. If you experience submission problems that may result in your application being late, send an e-mail to support@grants.gov and call the grants.gov help desk. Their phone number is posted on the grants.gov web site. The program manager associated with the RFA will use programmatic discretion in accepting late arriving proposals due to documented electronic submission problems.

Hard copy proposals should be clamped in the upper left-hand corner, but left unbound. The 2 additional copies can be stapled in the upper left-hand corner or bound on the left edge. Electronically submitted or hard copy page margin must be one inch (2.5 cm) at the top, bottom, left, and right, and the typeface standard 12-point size must be clear and easily legible. Proposals should be single spaced.

C. Submission Dates and Times

Anticipated Publication Date: 6/30/2005

The deadline for receipt of proposals at the CSCOR office is 3 p.m. EST, October 25, 2005 (Note that late-arriving applications provided to a delivery service on or before October 24, 2005, with delivery guaranteed before 3 p.m., EST on October 25, 2005 will be accepted for review if the applicant can document that the application was provided to the delivery service with delivery to the address listed below guaranteed by the specified closing date and

time; and, in any event, the proposals are received in the NCCOS/CSCOR/COP office by 3 p.m., EST, no later than 2 business days following the closing date.)

D. Intergovernmental Review

Applications under this program are not subject to Executive Order 12372, ?Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs.? It has been determined that this notice is not significant for purposes of Executive Order 12866. Pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 553(a) (2), an opportunity for public notice and comment is not required for this notice relating to grants, benefits and contracts. Because this notice is exempt from the notice and comment provisions of the Administrative Procedure Act, a Regulatory Flexibility Analysis is not required, and none has been prepared. It has been determined that this notice does not contain policies with Federalism implications as that term is defined in Executive Order 13132.

E. Funding Restrictions

Indirect Costs: Regardless of any approved indirect cost rate applicable to the award, the maximum dollar amount of allocable indirect costs for which DOC will reimburse the recipient shall be the lesser of (a) the line item amount for the Federal share of indirect costs contained in the approved budget of the award or (b) the Federal share of the total allocable indirect costs of the award based on the indirect cost rate approved by a cognizant or oversight Federal agency and current at the time the cost was incurred, provided the rate is approved on or before the award end date.

F. Other Submission Requirements

Proposals must include evidence of linkages between the scientific questions and management needs, in the form of participation of co-investigators from both scientific and management entities.

It is the applicant's responsibility to obtain all necessary Federal, state and local government permits and approvals where necessary for the proposed work to be conducted. Applicants are expected to design their proposals so that they minimize the potential adverse impact on the environment. If applicable, documentation of requests or approvals of environmental permits must be included in the proposal package. Applications will be reviewed to ensure that they have sufficient environmental documentation to allow program staff to determine whether the proposal is categorically excluded from further NEPA analysis, or whether an Environmental Assessment is necessary in conformance with requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act. For those applications needing an

Environmental Assessment, affected applicants will be informed after the peer review stage; and will be requested to assist in the preparation of a draft of the assessment (prior to award).

Failure to apply for and/or obtain Federal, state, and local permits, approvals, letters of agreement, or failure to provide environmental analysis where necessary (i.e. NEPA environmental assessment) will also delay the award of funds if a project is otherwise selected for funding.

V. Application Review Information

A. Evaluation Criteria

1. Importance and/or relevance and applicability of proposed project to the program goals: This ascertains whether there is intrinsic value in the proposed work and/or relevance to NOAA, federal, regional, state, or local activities (30 percent). For this competition, this refers to the likelihood that the research will make substantial contributions or develop products leading to improved management of coastal resources, and demonstrated links to management entities who will use the results of the proposed work;

2. Technical/scientific merit: This assesses whether the approach is technically sound and/or innovative, if the methods are appropriate, and whether there are clear project goals and objectives (30 percent). For this competition, this refers to intrinsic scientific value of the proposed work and the likelihood that it will lead to fundamental advancements, new discoveries, or will have substantial impact on progress in that field. The proposed work should have focused science objectives and a complete and efficient strategy for making measurements and observations in support of the objectives. The approach should be sound and logically planned throughout the cycle of the proposed work;

3. Overall qualifications of applicants: This ascertains whether the applicant possesses the necessary education, experience, training, facilities, and administrative resources to accomplish the project (20 percent). For this competition, this refers to the capability of the investigators and collaborators to complete the proposed work as evidenced by past research accomplishments, previous cooperative work, timely communication, and the sharing of findings, data, and other research products;

4. Project costs: The Budget is evaluated to determine if it is realistic and commensurate with the project needs and time-frame (10 percent);

5. Outreach and education: NOAA assesses whether this project provides a focused and effective education and outreach strategy regarding NOAA's mission to protect the Nation's

natural resources (10 percent). For this competition, this refers to demonstrated connections and ability to provide results in accessible format to a variety of audiences including the general public.

B. Review and Selection Process

Once a full application has been received by NOAA, an initial administrative review is conducted to determine compliance with requirements and completeness of the application. All proposals will be evaluated and scored individually in accordance with the assigned weights of the above evaluation criteria by independent peer mail review and/or by independent peer panel review. Both Federal and non-Federal experts in the field may be used in this process. The peer mail reviewers will be several individuals with expertise in the subjects addressed by particular proposals. Each mail reviewer will see only certain individual proposals within his or her area of expertise, and score them individually on a scale of one to five, where scores represent respectively: Excellent (5), Very Good (4), Good (3), Fair (2), Poor (1).

The peer panel will comprise 4 to 9 individuals, with each individual having expertise in a separate area, so that the panel, as a whole, covers a range of scientific expertise. The panel will have access to all mail reviews of proposals, and will use the mail reviews in discussion and evaluation of the entire slate of proposals. All proposals will be evaluated and scored individually. The peer panel shall rate the proposals using the evaluation criteria and scores provided above and used by the mail reviewers. The individual peer panelist scores shall be averaged for each application and presented to the program officers. No consensus advice will be given by the independent peer mail review or the review panel.

The program officers will neither vote or score proposals as part of the independent peer panel nor participate in discussion of the merits of the proposal. Those proposals receiving an average panel score of "Fair" or "Poor" will not be given further consideration, and proposers will be notified of non-selection.

For the proposals rated by the panel as either "Excellent," "Very Good," or "Good", the program officers will (a) rank the proposals to be recommended for funding by average panel ratings, and/or by applying the project selection factors listed below; (b) determine the total duration of funding for each proposal; and (c) determine the amount of funds available for each proposal subject to the availability of fiscal year funds. Awards may not necessarily be made in rank order. In addition, proposals rated by the panel as either "Excellent," "Very

Good," or ``Good" that are not funded in the current fiscal period, may be considered for funding in another fiscal period without having to repeat the competitive review process.

Recommendations for funding are then forwarded to the selecting official, the Director of NCCOS/CSCOR/COP, for the final funding decision. In making the final selections, the Director will award in rank order unless the proposal is justified to be selected out of rank order based on the selection factors listed below in C.

Investigators may be asked to modify objectives, work plans or budgets, and provide supplemental information required by the agency prior to the award. When a decision has been made (whether an award or declination), verbatim anonymous copies of reviews and summaries of review panel deliberations, if any, will be made available to the proposer. Declined applications will be held in the NCCOS/CSCOR/COP for the required 3 years in accordance with the current retention requirements, and then destroyed.

The merit review ratings shall provide a rank order to the Selecting Official for final funding recommendations. A program officer may first make recommendations to the Selecting Official applying the selection factors below. The Selecting Official shall award in the rank order unless the proposal is justified to be selected out of rank order based upon one or more of the following factors:

1. Availability of funding.
2. Balance/distribution of funds:
 - a. Geographically
 - b. By type of institutions
 - c. By type of partners
 - d. By research areas
 - e. By project types

3. Whether this project duplicates other projects funded or considered for funding by NOAA or other federal agencies.

4. Program priorities and policy factors.
5. Applicant's prior award performance.
6. Partnerships and/or Participation of targeted groups.

7. adequacy of information necessary for NOAA staff to make a NEPA determination and draft necessary documentation before recommendations for funding are made to GMD. Hence, awards may not necessarily be made to the highest scored proposals. Unsuccessful applicants will be notified that their proposal was not among those recommended for funding.

C. Selection Factors

D. Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates

Subject to the availability of funds, review of proposals will begin in November, 2005. May 1, 2005 should be used as the proposed start date on proposals, unless otherwise directed by the Program Officer.

VI. Award Administration Information

A. Award Notices

The notice of award is signed by the NOAA Grants Officer and is the authorizing document. It is provided by postal mail to the appropriate business office of the recipient organization.

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

The Department of Commerce Pre-Award Notification Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements

The Department of Commerce Pre-Award Notification Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements contained in the Federal Register notice of December 30, 2004 (69 FR 78389) are applicable to this solicitation.

Limitation of Liability

In no event will NOAA or the Department of Commerce be responsible for proposal preparation costs if these programs fail to receive funding or are cancelled because of other agency priorities. Publication of this announcement does not oblige NOAA to award any specific project or to obligate any available funds.

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)

NOAA must analyze the potential environmental impacts, as required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), for applicant projects or proposals which are seeking NOAA federal funding opportunities. Detailed information on NOAA compliance with NEPA can be found at the following NOAA NEPA website: <http://www.nepa.noaa.gov/>, including our NOAA Administrative Order 216-6 for NEPA, http://www.nepa.noaa.gov/NAO216_6_TOC.pdf, and the Council on Environmental Quality implementation regulations, http://ceq.eh.doe.gov/nepa/regs/ceq/toc_ceq.htm). Consequently, as part of an applicant's package, and under their description of their program activities, applicants are required to provide detailed information on the activities to be conducted, locations, sites, species and habitat to be affected, possible construction activities, and any environmental concerns that may exist (e.g., the use and disposal of hazardous or toxic chemicals, introduction of non-indigenous species, impacts to endangered and threatened species, aquaculture projects, and impacts to coral reef systems).

In addition to providing specific information that will serve as the basis for any required impact analyses, applicants may also be requested to assist NOAA in drafting of an environmental assessment, if NOAA determines an assessment is required. Applicants will also be required to cooperate with NOAA in identifying and implementing feasible measures to reduce or avoid any identified adverse environmental impacts of their proposal. The failure to do so shall be grounds for the denial of an application.

In conformance with the Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements section 15 CFR 14.36, any data collected in projects supported by NCCOS/CSCOR should be delivered to a National Data Center (NDC), such as the National Oceanographic Data Center (NODC), in a format to be determined by the institution, the NODC, and the Program Officer. It is the responsibility of the institution for the delivery of these data; the DOC will not provide additional support for delivery beyond the award. Additionally, all biological cultures established, molecular probes developed, genetic sequences identified, mathematical models constructed, or other resulting information

products established through support provided by NCCOS/CSCOR are encouraged to be made available to the general research community at no or modest handling charge (to be determined by the institution, Program Officer, and DOC).

C. Reporting

All financial and progress reports shall be submitted electronically through the Grants Online system unless the recipient does not have internet access. In that case, hard copy financial reports are to be submitted to the NOAA Grants Officer and Performance (technical) reports are to be submitted to the NOAA program officer. Financial reports are semi-annual and Performance reports are annual.

VII. Agency Contacts

Technical Information. Beth Turner, Program Manager EcoFore 06, 603-862-4680, Internet: elizabeth.turner@noaa.gov.

Business Management Information. Laurie Golden, NCCOS/CSCOR/COP Grants Administrator, 301-713-3338/ext 151, Internet: Laurie.Golden@noaa.gov

VIII. Other Information

Notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person is required to respond to, nor shall any person be subject to a penalty for failure to comply with a collection of information subject to the requirements of the Paperwork Reduction Act, unless that collection displays a currently valid OMB control number.

This notification involves collection-of-information requirements subject to the Paperwork Reduction Act. The use of Standard Forms 424, 424A, 424B, and SF-LLL has been approved by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) under control numbers 0348-0043, 0348-0044, 0348-0040 and 0348-0046.